

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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R 161155Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9266

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 0589

EXDIS

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR CATEGORY EXDIS VICE NODIS

FOR DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY EAGLEBURGER FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: AFSP, APER, EG
SUBJ: CONFIGURATION OF CAIRO POST

1. AS YOU KNOW, I HAVE SOUGHT TO KEEP THE CAIRO
COMPLEMENT LEAN AND TOTALLY EGYPT ORIENTED. I
BELIEVE THIS IS DESIRABLE BOTH FOR REASONS OF
EFFICIENCY AND TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE. IN THIS
CONTEXT, I HAVE REGULARLY TURNED DOWN REQUESTS TO
ASSIGN REGIONAL OFFICERS TO CAIRO. HOWEVER, WITH
THE CLOSURE OF BEIRUT AS A REGIONAL CENTER, THE
PRESSURE IS MOUNTING TO HAVE CAIRO AS THE REGIONAL
BASE. I HAVE THUS FAR STAVED OFF SUCH ATTEMPTS, BUT
THEY KEEP CROPPING UP ALL OVER THE PLACE. FOR
EXAMPLE, WITH EB'S SUPPORT, COMMERCE NOW WANTS TO
SET UP RTDO IN CAIRO (MY VIEWS ON THAT SUBJECT WERE
SET FORTH IN CAIRO'S 0026 AND 0453). SIMILARLY, A
VISITING DEA REP IS RECOMMENDING THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A THREE-MAN DEA DISTRICT OFFICE IN CAIRO (I WILL
COMMENT ON THAT RECOMMENDATION BY SEPTTEL). LIBRARY
OF CONGRESS WANTS ITS REGIONAL REP IN CAIRO AS DO
USIA AND VARIOUS OTHER USG AGENCIES. IN CIRCUMSTANCES
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WE NEED REVIEW WHAT WE WANT FUTURE CONFIGURATION OF

CAIRO TO BE.

2. SIMPLY STATED, THE ARGUMENTS FOR CAIRO AS A REGIONAL CENTER ARE: (A) ITS GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION; (B) REASONABLE AIRLINE CONNECTIONS WITH NEARBY ME COUNTRIES; (C) THE AVAILABILITY OF PL 480 EGYPTIAN POUNDS TO PAY EXPENSES.

3. THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST IT ARE ESSENTIALLY: (A) THE SEVERE HOUSING SHORTAGE; (B) TOTALLY INADEQUATE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES; (C) IT WOULD UNDESIRABLY RAISE OUR PROFILE; (D) OUR SMALL GSO AND C&R STAFF IS ALREADY HAVING DIFFICULTY COPING WITH EXISTING WORKLOAD AND COULD NOT HANDLE REGIONAL OFFICES WITHOUT CONSIDERABLE AUGMENTATION.

4. SO FAR AS PRESENT GOE IS CONCERNED, IT WOULD PROBABLY NOT OBJECT TO REGIONAL OFFICERS BEING ASSIGNED HERE. FAHMY AND OTHER EGYPTIANS HAVE OFTEN EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT MY DESIRE KEEP POST SMALL. SAME TIME, WE MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT, WHILE US-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS ARE CURRENTLY VERY GOOD, THEY ARE BASED ON A RELATIVELY NEW AND RATHER DELICATE FOUNDATION. SHOULD THE PEACE PROCESS FALTER OR NEW, DIFFERENTLY ORIENTED LEADERSHIPS APPEAR IN EITHER OF OUR COUNTRIES, RESULTANT EGYPTIAN DISENCHANTMENT COULD PROMPT NEW STRAINS IN OUR RELATIONS. IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, LARGE EMBASSY STAFF AND ESPECIALLY THOSE NOT SPECIFICALLY EGYPT ORIENTED, WILL INEVITABLY AROUSE SUSPICION OF OUR PURPOSES. IN SHORT, WE CANNOT YET TAKE EGYPT FOR GRANTED AS SOME USG AGENCIES TEND TO DO.

5. I PERSONALLY WOULD PREFER TO KEEP THE POST SOLELY EGYPT ORIENTED. ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, I THINK SUCH A CONFIGURATION IS BEST SUITED TO OUR PRESENT PURPOSE HERE. I NEED TO KNOW, HOWEVER, HOW STRONGLY DEPT WILL SUPPORT ME WITH OTHER AGENCIES IN OPPOSING RELOCATION OF REGIONAL OFFICES HERE. ONE POSSIBILITY MIGHT, OF COURSE, BE
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ASSIGNING SOME REGIONAL OFFICERS HERE AND OTHERS ELSEWHERE. I HAVE SOME MISGIVINGS ABOUT SUCH AN APPROACH. ONCE THE FLOOD GATES FOR REGIONALS ARE OPENED, WE WOULD QUICKLY HAVE AN INUNDATION.

6. I WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR VIEWS ON THE ABOVE. IT WILL TAKE STRONG DEPT. SUPPORT, PERHAPS AT THE

SECRETARY LEVEL, TO RESIST THE GROWING PRESSURE FOR REGIONALS TO BE ASSIGNED HERE. I AM FULLY PREPARED TO CONTINUE TO OPPOSE IT FROM HERE IF I CAN BE SURE OF SUCH CONTINUING SUPPORT.

7. INCIDENTALLY, AID/W (NOOTER) HAS APPROACHED ME TO SUGGEST THAT A MINIMUM OF 70 RPT 70 AID PEOPLE WILL BE NECESSARY TO INSURE THAT \$750 MILLION FY 76 PROGRAM FOR EGYPT AND ROUGHLY SIMILAR ONE FOR FY 77 ARE EFFECTIVELY MANAGED. AT PRESENT I HAVE 20 AID PEOPLE. AID/W IS CONCERNED THAT, WITHOUT ADEQUATE NUMBER OF PEOPLE TO MONITOR PROGRAM, WE COULD HAVE SERIOUS PROBLEMS. I HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT I SHARE VIEW AID PROGRAM MUST BE EFFICIENTLY MANGED AND ABSOLUTELY SCANDAL FREE. WHILE AGREEING IN PRINCIPLE THAT ADDITIONAL PEOPLE WILL BE NEEDED PROPERLY TO MONITOR PROGRAM, I HAVE QUESTIONED PROPOSED QUANTUM JUDGMENT OF 50. INSTEAD, I WANT TO HAVE AID/C REP WORK WITH ME TO DETERMINE HOW MANY ADDITIONAL PEOPLE WILL INITIALLY BE NEEDED. THEREAFTER DEPENDING UPON DEMONSTRABLE REQUIREMENT AS WE GO ALONG, WE CAN CONSIDER WHAT ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS MAY EXIST. WHATEVER INITIAL AID INCREMENT TURNS OUT TO BE, THEY WILL PLACE AN ADDITIONAL BURDEN ON OUR HARD-PRESSED ADMIN SECTION AND, SEPARATELY, ON CAIRO'S TIGHT HOUSING AVAILABILITIES.
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